

RANGIORA SEVENTY YEARS AGO

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By the courtesy of Mr. C. J. Keir we are able to print the following very interesting account of life in Rangiora during the drought of 1862-63. The writer, Mrs. Rebecca Bradley (néé Doggett,) of Waimate, is Mr. Keir's aunt.

SHRIMPS FROM A WELL IN VICTORIA STREET

The Drought of 1802

DOWN Victoria Street near Northbrook on the east side there is a small spring of water concreted round, and another in Ivory Street. Now I wonder how many of the young people of Rangiora to-day know why that was done and what those two springs meant to the residents of Rangiora in the very dry hot summer of 1862 and 1863.

We had very little heavy southwest rain through the winter of 1862 and no snow fell on the hills to supply the rivers. The last rain was in September and very hot north-westers came on as usual in October. The heat was excessive, and by Christmas the wells were nearly dry, and though the men tried to sink deeper there seemed to be no springs in the lower shingle. In January all the creeks were dry and there were just a few pools of water in the Cust and Ashley rivers.

There was just that spring hole in Victoria Street, called at that time Zuliur's Spring. Two in Ivory Street had water in and everybody had to get water from those. By the end of April one in Ivory Street was dry and the others were very low. There was no water wasted and every drop had to be used two or three times before it was poured on the root of some plant to keep it alive. What I mean is that the washing water was used to wash the children's feet and legs, then the floor was scrubbed with it, and then a plant got the benefit of it.

There was no rain till the middle of June, though we had two days soft drizzle. The roofs of the houses were of shingles at that time, and a drip would fall from each shingle. Oh the array of pots put out to catch the drips—saucepans, pie dishes, and mugs. I remember on the second day the clergyman, the Rev. B. W. Dudley, and his daughter drove down High Street in a buggy, stopping everyone to ask if they were pleased to see the rain; then they came down Victoria Street and got the children out of the one school and started them singing 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.' The weather was cooler after that, and heavy south-west rain came on in July, the springs soon rose in the wells and the creeks were now running again; but I never forget that time, and now cannot let water run to waste as some do. One strange thing happened after the second day's rain in July. When I went past the spring in Ivory Street I noticed it was full to the brim of clayey water and what I thought

looked like shrimps. I told my mother and of course got laughed at. But my brother went with me, and we took a strainer and dipped the water up and got quite a quart of small shrimps we took them home and cooked them —the first and only shrimps I have eaten in New Zealand.”

An Early Bush Fire

FLAME! FOR A FORTNIGHT. Some time about the end of the year 1858 a Mr. De Bourbelle and Mr. Birch came to Rangiora and took up several acres of the best bush land. They had an engine and saw mill sent out from England. At the same time a few families came over from Sunderland in England, and a fresh industry started with success which of course some of the old sawyers did not like.

An Immigrant's Mistake. At first it looked as if some of their trade would be taken away, but in '59 and '60 there was a great coming of other people to Rangiora. The new idea of part-free passages had started, and the work at the mill went on successfully until a fire in either the end of '61 or the first part of '62 destroyed a large part of the bush. It was hot north-west weather, and a young girl at one of the homes near the mill carried out some live embers and laid them down by a dry stump. By 10 o'clock a fire had started to spread, and by noon that day the mill was in danger. By the aid of some working bullocks the engine was pulled out to where Brockelhurst is now, hut the mill and a large stack of sawn timber was destroyed, and then the standing hush. For days and nights this was burning fiercely, and every man available was kept busy fighting the flames from some of the men's homes. The women and children had to leave with some of their belongings. I remember Mrs. C. Munm and three children came to my mother's. The wind used to chop round from west to, north, so the men were constantly chopping some belts of trees down in hopes of saving hush further on.

Branch Carried Two Miles. It was an awe-inspiring sight to stand at night and see acres of large tall trees alight. An extra gust of wind would come and a large limb, some feet in length, would be caught up and taken half a mile or more away to start a fire in another part. In fact one branch was supposed to have been carried to Church Bush, nearly two miles away, and to have set it on fire. The people of Woodend attended to that, then some more branches were blown right over to the swamp at Flaxton and got in the peat there. That fire just smouldered under the ground in places till the big flood of February 1868. It was an anxious time until at the end of a fortnight the wind changed to a strong south-west with heavy rain. I think everyone said 'Thank God' for that. The mill buildings were put up temporarily for a time, and what were any good of the trees that had been cut down were sawn up. About 1864 Mr. De Bourbelle sold his share to a Mr. Kiinrick and went back, to England, I think. The engine and saws were removed to Oxford, and a mill was started there and carried on for some years. A good many of the families went to Oxford at that time.

An Amusing Incident. There was one little cause of amusement while the fire was raging that we often laughed about afterwards. One man had a few acres of bush land; on the third day the wind had changed a bit, and to save three homes and some acres of very fine trees, the fire-fighters decided to cut a belt of trees down and drag them away. The owner heard of this and went down in a great hurry. He saw, first of all, his bush being cut down and ordered the men to stop, till he knew who was going to recompense him for the loss. He used to stutter a lot land the angrier he was the more he stuttered. Of course the men got angry too and would not take any notice of him. As he kept on hindering them a Mr. White, who saw there would be more trouble, quietly took hold of him and led him away from the men along a narrow track, and told him to go home. If his trees got burnt he would get recompense, and by doing what they were the men were giving him a chance of saving most of his timber. Mr. White was a very big strong man known as "Nosey" White. At the end of the track he (quite by accident, you know) gave the owner of the trees a push and he landed in mud knee-deep. When helped out he went home a wiser and dirtier man.

An Event at Sea.

Mrs Bradley, now of Waimate, but one of Rangiora's earliest residents, has sent us this further interesting letter:

It was on the 19th day of August, 1857. We were in, mid-ocean on board the sailing ship "Glentanner," nearly three months after we left Taunton Docks. We had been becalmed for more than a fortnight. Captain Bruce had not been to New Zealand before, nor had any of the sailors except one, an old Portuguese named Antony. The route was not very well known those days. The day had been very hot, with not a breath of wind. The evening was also calm, and the sailors who were not on duty, with the young men and women, were dancing on the deck near our cabin. We children were allowed to stop up a bit later as it was my sister Maria's birthday. Mother had brought a cake with her for that day. About nine o'clock, or a little after, the ship seemed to rock and then toss up. A great rattling noise was heard on deck, two or three of the dancers came tumbling down our hatchway, and a Mr Craythorne came past with a large iron hook from the rigging through his shoulder. Then I noticed all at once that we all seemed to be thrown backwards and there was another awful shaking, and the things on the table, a fixture, all fell towards our end.

The captain gave a great shout and there were screaming and groans on deck and below. Just as suddenly I noticed that we were coming upright again and the things on the table going back. There was another loud shout from the captain. My mother told me afterwards what had happened. The first time the captain shouted he said "My God, we are lost." and then as he saw the ship lifting again lie shouted. "No, thank God, we are safe if you men will do your duty quick." Then the trouble came. It was pitch dark by this time, but something had to be done in the rigging of the main mast. The sailors refused to go aloft. The captain, a hot-headed Scotchman, was going to make them go

at the point of the pistol when old Antony offered to go if another one would go with him. Black Sam offered. The captain said Antony was off duty and ought not to have to go. "Well," Antony said to the captain, "our safety depends on it." "Yes," the captain said, "and quick too." They both went up aloft. Then while they were attending to what was wanted, another awful crash came, the main mast and rigging with some sails went over, and poor old Antony went too and was never seen again. Black Sam was found on deck very much crushed but alive. No boats could be lowered to search for Antony. Torches were waved and his name called, but there was no answer. We were battened down in our cabins nearly a fortnight after that while repairs were being made and it was a strange-looking boat we saw when we did go up on deck. Where the big masts had been there were long spars fixed with some rigging and sails attached, part of the steering gear was gone, and that is how our boat looked when it arrived in Lyttelton in October.

Poor Antony was of great help to the captain, as he had been to New Zealand before, and he was sadly missed—a willing man to obey orders and do his duty faithfully. He was about 60 years old, and could speak fairly good English. He was very fond of children. It was his delight on a Sunday afternoon off duty to get several of us children when we came out of a Sunday School that a Miss Ellis, the doctor's daughter, held. He would ask us to sing hymns we had learnt, and one of the older ones to read him a chapter out of the Bible. Then he would give us nuts and raisins to eat. On Sunday, the 18th, we had all had a pretty card given us with a picture, of the new Jerusalem representing Heaven, and the hymn "There is a better world they say, Oh, so bright." I remember that my sister gave her card to Antony, who had us sing the hymn, and then with tears in his eyes said "A lovely place, I wish I were there." I always like to think of Antony receiving his reward—a life given for the safety of others.

Lyttelton in 1857

TO RANGIORA ON FOOT. This is a further instalment of the memories of Mrs Bradley, now of Waimate, but formerly of Rangiora.

Well I remember the early hours of the 3rd of October, 1857. About three o'clock father, who with others had been on deck all night watching for the first glimpse of land came down the steps and told mother to come up on deck. I was awake and they woke my eldest sister, put our cloaks around us, and took us with them. Oh, it was a lovely sight; a bright moonlight night and those dark looking mountains with white snow caps, the new land we were going to make our home. We had not seen a sight of land for nearly five months—a long rough passage—and we were not allowed to stay on deck long, so went back to our beds, but not to sleep. The sailors were very busy and noisy hauling up the anchors. I think it would be about 7 o'clock when they put the anchor out quite a mile from the point the boats reach now. We were not allowed on deck, but took turns at looking through the port holes and thought we could see women picking peas as we passed some of the bays.

Fresh Food. We had not anchored long when surf boats came from Port. The first had some shipping officials and the health officer on board. Then others came with fresh meat, potatoes, cabbages, onions, and above all bread. We had not tasted fresh meat or vegetables and bread for nearly five months. I never forgot that dinner. It was a great treat, and then we had fresh milk and bakers' buns with bread and butter for tea. Some of the passengers who had friends in the Port of Christchurch left the ship that afternoon, but we had to wait till mother's brother, Mr W. Ivory, of Rangiora, came to meet us. He and Uncle W. Stapleforth came before dinner the next day. I remember we had rhubarb tart that day for dinner.

Into Barracks. We left the ship in the afternoon and went into the barracks—a large room with sleeping bunks top and bottom round three sides, and a large fireplace at one end with a long table and benches in the middle of the room. The food was cooked in a place at the back and the men slept in another part. My uncle stayed in Lyttelton that night and left early the next morning, and it was arranged that my Uncle Ivory was to meet us at Kaiapoi with bullocks and a dray. We started from barracks early on the morning of the ninth of October. Our luggage would not arrive at Rangiora for nearly a fortnight, so we three eldest girls had a small parcel to carry. Father had a big bundle strapped to his back and carried my brother John, who was four years, old. Mother had a basket on one arm and carried the youngest sister Lucy on the other arm. Uncle Ivory and his wife had one child to carry and Aunt's sister, a single woman, helped with the different parcels. I think she was Miss Esther Dickhoff and that she afterwards became Mrs H. Carter of Rangiora.

Walk Over the Hills. But I am leaving my story of the walk, which was not round by Sumner but over the hills on a frightfully hot day. We got to the top before eleven o'clock. A man was working there. It was a rough tussock road. Uncle made the remark to the man that it was very hot. The man said it always seemed to strike hotter just at that part, which was where Mr Williams had died of sunstroke a year before. A sister of that Mr Williams, came out to her brother on our ship the "Glentanner," and to show how slowly news came to England from New Zealand in those days, her brother died in October, and when she left England the first week in June she had no word of his death and did not know till she arrived in Port. We walked down the hill to the foot and there a large cart and horse met us and took us in to Christchurch. The first road was being formed, I think Colombo Road, and the first stone building was being built either for Mr Gould or his brother-in-law, a Mr Lewis, and was afterwards known as Cookham House, a boot shop. We camped for dinner on the site where the Cathedral now stands, staying about an hour.

Through Papanui in a Dray. My father really came out to start a soap works, and brought letters of introduction to a Mr Brittan or Bishop and a Mr Watts Russell, from his old master at home. Father saw one of those men that day, and was to go back to Christchurch in a fortnight. We had a rough journey in that dray through Papanui, and then through the Maori pa. It was the first time we had seen Maoris and we were very frightened. At last we got to the river, the Waimakariri. There was no bridge then, just a punt or raft, and the

river was in heavy flood. Poor mother said she dare not go on the raft, but it was a case of must or stay where the Maoris were, so we went ahead and got over safely. Another dray took us into Kaiapoi—a very small place at that time—and then we had a further disappointment. We had not arrived by the dray by which uncle expected us, and he thought we would not come till the next day, so had started back home again. There was not a room to be had in Kaiapoi for the night, so we had to start and walk to Rangiora; not on the short road there is now through Flaxton but round by Woodend. I often wonder how we children and our mothers did it. We called at one house in Woodend —a Mr Gibbs or Stone's, and asked for a drink. The woman kindly made us some hot coffee and gave us a hot scone each and told us our uncle, had passed up about an hour earlier. There were no telephones those days to tell him we were coming. The next house we called at to ask the way was a Mr Robinson's, opposite where, Mr Leech lived. They said we would not be able to wade through the Cam, as it was in flood, but sent a boy with us to where there was a rough bridge at Coldstream, nearly two miles out of our way.

Home at Last. Next we called at a Mr Vincent's, as it was dark then, to ask where uncle lived. Mrs Vincent kindly gave us all a drink of new milk, and Mr H. Carter, who was there, went with us and showed us where Uncle Ivory lived. Uncle had just sat down to his supper. He was very surprised to see us. We rested there for a short time, but the houses were all small in those days, so some of us had to go to Uncle Stapleforth's to sleep—father, mother, and four children. Mr Carter showed us the way and kindly carried my brother John. Of course aunt and uncle were in bed, but soon got up, and although the house was small, beds were made up on the floor and the children were soon in bed and fast asleep, tired out with the long day's journey. I think the two sisters sat up most of the night talking about the friends at home, but mother rested well the next day. The young people of these days can form no idea of what the early settlers had to go through—no roads or other means of conveyance, and rough houses, yet we had a great many things to be thankful for.

First Sports in Rangiora.

NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1859 [By REBECCA BRADLEY]

There are not many people left New Zealand who attended a sports gathering seventy-five years ago; and fewer still who could write an account of the experience. Mrs Bradley, who now lives in Waimate, has both claims to distinction.

THIS was an annual gathering from 1859. At that time there were not many residents in Rangiora, and it was started on a very small scale, but all met in a very friendly manner and contributed their share to the total of pleasure.

Cricket to Leap-Frog. At that time there was a small paddock cleared of bush and grassed, just down over North Brook on the west side. It belonged to Mr O. C. Torlesse. The people met soon after one o'clock, the men playing cricket

and quoits. Some indulged in the old game of leap frog. There were a few races for men, woman and children and, yes, some big boys and girls joined in a game of "kiss-in-the-ring," and "Sally-Walker-catch-me-if-you-can." No money prizes were given for the races. Some of the young men and women enjoyed an old-fashioned country dance and my uncle, Mr C. Jennings, used to play the fiddle for them. Some Scotch men and women gave Scotch reels and a few Irishmen gave an Irish jig. Then old Mr Morton, who, with his wife, lived with Mr Torlesse, gave a dance by himself. I think it was called "John Ploughman's Dance." He was-dressed in a white linen smock, not a coat, that came past his waist. Below that he wore Bedford cord breeches, gaiters, and hob-nailed boots. While he danced he held in his hand a pewter mug brimming with beer. I think he took a sip at it now and again: he certainly caused much amusement.

Back After Tea. About six o'clock we all went home for tea and in the evening accepted Mr Torlesse's invitation to return to his big shed. It was a lovely night and most of the people went back. A piano was taken into the shed, and most of the ladies put on evening dresses they had brought from the Old Country. There were some good songs and a little play was acted. I remember Mr C. Morton, son of old Mr Morton, was in Rangiora for his holidays. (He was, afterwards to become our first schoolmaster). He sang "the Bay of Biscay" and "Man the Lifeboat." He had a wonderful voice.

Claret Cup. At the end of the entertainment we had supper handed round, and the children had ginger and hop beer to drink. Old Mr Townsend, the oldest gentleman in Rangiora, asked Mrs Morton if she could mix a claret cup or punch bowl. I forget which it was, but I know it was made in a large mixing bowl and all the adults had a wineglass or a very small cup. I remember that Mrs Merton was very pleased and excited because Mr Townsend complimented her in the way she had made it, saying that he had never tasted better at any hunting party in England. After all was over we joined in singing "Auld Lang Syne" and "God Bless our Gracious Queen." Some of the men spoke a few words of thanks to those responsible for the pleasant, evening; then we parted and made our way home through tussocks, flax, and bog holes, very tired but with very pleasant memories. For three or four years after that the sports were held in the same paddock, but by then there were more people in the district and Mr Perceval's flax paddock, where the saleyards are now, was cleared and the sports were held there.

Maoris Roast An Ox. It was in '62 that the Maoris offered to make an oven and roast a young bullock whole, with potatoes and cabbages cooked in baskets of flax in the same oven. Those who had some of it to eat said that it was very good. This custom was kept up for some years. Of course the sports of to-day are carried out in quite a different way, but I doubt if there is as much real enjoyment got out of it as we got in the old days.

Bullocks and the Parson

SOME INTERESTING CHARACTERS [By Rebecca Bradley.]

One I remember so well was Mickie Hall, an Irishman. He was a quiet peaceable man and a good worker when sober, but when there were a few wet days and Mickie got to the Red Lion Hotel—he became a real wild Irishman. He would leave in the late evening going down the track that is now Victoria Street singing, shouting “I am the man from Tipperary. Who dares to come and tread on the tail of my coat?” And sometimes he would think someone was near enough to try that, and would have a fight with the supposed opponent and generally finished up by plunging into a spring hole. He would then shout “I am drowned. I am drowned,” and eventually Mr. E. York, who lived near, would go and pull him out after he had been long enough in slush to get sobered a little.

Mickie Falls In Love. It was in the early sixties Mickie met and fell madly in love with a young girl at Woodend. Then he altered his cry to “I am in love, I am in love with Susannah. I will be married to Susannah.” She, not liking service, consented to a quick marriage, so Mickie decided she should have a silk dress to be married in. There was no chance of getting one made nearer than Christchurch and travelling took time in those days, so he let it be known that he wanted to buy a silk dress, light in colour. My aunt, Mrs. Jennings, had brought three out with her—one a pretty dove colour, the skirt of small flounces trimmed with narrow black velvet. Mickie took a fancy to it and gave aunt £6 for it. The girl made a pretty bride, and of course the spree was kept up for a few days and it took a few more days for Mickie to get sober. Poor girl, I think she often repented of the hasty marriage.

Revival Meetings. After some years there were revival meetings held in Rangiora. I can’t remember whether it was by some Methodist preacher or the Salvation Army, but Mickie became converted and quite a changed man and led a consistent Christian life for the remaining years before he died.

Mixing the Days. Then there was Crazy Tyack, a well educated man, who owned the section of land where Good Street is now. He was not mad enough to put away, but had strange ideas. One was that Wednesday was Sunday and he would always put on his best suit and say he was going to church. Anyone he saw working he would scold and order to leave off. After there was a church built he would go and ring the bell, and when the vicar, Mr. Dudley, tried to tell him it was not Sunday, Tyack would tell him he would report him to the Bishop for not attending to his duty. Another of his strange ways that amused us youngsters was when he used to play leapfrog with a black cat he had. He would leap over the cat and then puss was supposed to leap over him. Sometimes it did and sometimes it went its own way, much to Tyack’s disgust. Poor fellow, in the early ’seventies he went away one morning—told a neighbour he was going where the grass was always green, and was never heard of again.

A Frenchman. Next there Was M. Zulieur, a Frenchman, who had a little black and tan dog called Petite, and a large black cat with one white paw and a white breast. These two went with their master everywhere. He had a friend at Belfast whom he used to walk to see once a month on a Sunday. There he met a young lady of an age not told—a dressmaker. She took a great fancy to the cat, but Monsieur said he could not part with it. Eventually he said he did “vant a vife bad,” so if Madam would be his wife she would have the cat for her very own. After a few months she agreed to that. They seemed to get on very well, but were a funny couple. To our ideas he looked very much like some of the old French generals—sharp features, very bright eye, little goatee beard and moustache standing out from each side of his mouth, three or six inches long with a little curl on the end, and walked very erect. Madam always held his arm, had curls down each side of her face, large ear-rings, and the cat on her side. The dog was on the master’s side.

A Duty To Do. Then there was cranky Ward, who certainly was cranky in a good many ways and harmless for some years. But at last he, felt sure he had a duty to do for his Creator, and said he had been told from Heaven to destroy the inhabitants of Rangiora. So one night they were alarmed by hearing a noise like a tin being broken and Ward shouting “Prepare, prepare to meet your doom by fire.” After much trouble he was overcome and taken to Christchurch, never to return to Rangiora.

By Tip Dray. I forgot in my account of New Year sports to mention one person that always interested us - an old lady who lived at East Eyeoton. She must have had dropsy, I think. She was so big she could not walk but used to be brought in a tip-dray, drawn by a white bullock. In the dray would be two sacks of straw or tussock. One she sat on and when they arrived at the sports ground two of the family would be ready to slip the one sack out on to the ground. Then the dray would be tipped up very gently and she would be placed on the sack and sit there all the time. Friends would have a chat to her and she seemed to enjoy her outing. When it was time to go home the dray would be tipped up and two of them would raise her very gently into it and put her on the other sack. It was very amusing to us young folk.

Qualified Bullock-Drivers. It used to be said that to be a good bullock driver a man had to be a good swearer. There were a few in the early days who were good at both. Perhaps it was necessary to get the bullocks to move in some of the bog holes, but there was one man who, to use an old colonial term, would take the cake at bullock driving and swearing. Bob Dickinson was well known for both accomplishments.

When the Parson Swore. The Rev. Mr. Raven, the first Church of England minister at Woodend, used to own a team of bullocks and dray, and when he wanted any timber he would come to Rangiora with his man Charley Martin. Getting to the saw pits with an empty dray was not so bad except in the winter time and would not need much strong language. But once I well remember he came in the winter time, went up what was called Breaches Road (now East Belt), intending to go up what is now King Street, on his way home. The timber

was picked out and loaded and then they had lunch. Then they made a start for home, or rather, intended to do so, but the bullocks had moved about and more slush and mud had got round the wheels. The bullocks would not move, the whip was used freely, then Charley got mad and started to swear. Mr. Raven was very shocked and told Charley to stop, saying he would not have his bullocks sworn at. At last Charley put the whip down and said perhaps Mr. Raven would try. "Oh yes," he said, it only wanted kind words and coaxing. He tried rubbing their backs, lifting the yokes a hit, scratching their heads, and using kind words. No use. The bullocks would not budge. Then Charley suggested taking off some of the load. That was done but still no use. After more than an hour Mr. Raven's temper gave way. He threw down the whip and said, "There, Charley, whip, swear, or anything you like as long as you get these d beasts to move. I am hungry and want to get home for my tea." Perhaps the bullocks felt the same or the mud may have hardened. Anyway after a good whipping and some tall talking they made a move, and after a few chains of mud the track improved, and they got back to Woodend about nine o'clock. It used to be a common remark after that when a parson had to swear to drive bullocks

EASTER 1861. A Sunday School Treat

FURTHER MEMORIES OF MRS BRADLEY. This is a further instalment of the very interesting memories of Mrs Bradley who, though she now lives in Waimate, was one of the earliest residents of Rangiora.

THE FIRST SUNDAY SCHOOL was started by the Free Methodists in the latter part of 1860 and our first treat was to be on Good Friday, 1861. The children practised a lot of hymns which we were to sing. We were to start at 2 o'clock from the Methodist Church, Victoria Street, and march, waving little flags and singing, up on to what is High Street now and down to Mr George Booth's house. Mr W. Buss lived in that house after Mr Booth moved to Christchurch. Mr Booth was the superintendent of the Sunday school, and two of his daughters were teachers with Mr George Watson. When we got to the house we were to have games for a time and tea. How some of us looked forward to having a good time! We remembered the nice things we used to have for our Sunday school tea in England.

A First Disappointment. Well, the day came and our first disappointment was a thick mist, but we thought it must clear by noon. Still no sun came out, and by the time we all met at church a drizzly rain had set in. We started singing our hymns and waving our little flags, but we were getting wet by the time we got to Mr Booth's place. It was too wet for any games, so forms were stood in the kitchen and we crowded in there, sang more hymns, and had a good address from our superintendent and a speech by Mr Watson.

No Fire For Tea. Then the tea was to come; but the fire could not be lit in the kitchen as the forms took up the room. Those people were new chums, and did not know what the old chums did to get over such difficulties by digging out a few sods in a sheltered spot outside and making a good wood fire with

kettles or pots close to it which would not take long to boil. We each had to hand over the mugs we had brought with us and have them filled with cold milk—disappointment number two.

Ancient Buns. Then came the food. We expected buns, or bread and butter, and tarts and cakes. A clothes basket was brought in with some very large dark looking buns and one was handed to each child. Well, dark sugar had been put in in small quantities, some spice, perhaps some lard or butter, no eggs, and the currants must have been thrown from a distance so that a number missed the flour. The buns were very hard. That was all we got — disappointment number three.

Grace for What? We had to sing grace before and after that meal. Then with another hymn and some thanks spoken by Mr Watson on behalf of the children to Mr and Mrs Booth for the nice time we had had, it was all over. I question if many of the children meant that. Then we ran home very cold and hungry to cross mothers because we had been kept so long in our wet things. A good many had bad colds afterwards. When I think of that time after some of the Sunday school treats I have helped with in past years, I think what a lot the children of to-day have to be thankful for. And yet they do not understand or appreciate their blessings.

Weddings Sixty-Five Years Ago

WEST EYRETON IN 1869. (Written for THE GAZETTE.) [By Rebecca Bradley]

I was pleased to be well enough to go from Waimate to West Eyreton in March, this year to my grandson's wedding, and as it was just 65 years that month since I went into the district a bride of a week, I thought I would just give a short account of the difference. The bride of this year has a lovely wedding and goes away for a fortnight's honeymoon, comes home by car or train to a nice house all painted and papered afresh and all conveniences. I don't begrudge any of it to the brides of today, but what a different home I, as well as others, went to. Four hours on a spring dray, no road, no bridges, just a wide open plain, and in the drag was what furniture we had to start with—a table, a bedstead, one chair, and two boxes to be covered with chintz for two more seats, a very rough home-made sofa; but it was a real comfortable sofa after being covered with sacking and stuffed with dry tussock and covered with chintz, besides coming in handy when an extra bed was wanted. Then we had kettle and saucepans, not forgetting the iron three-legged camp oven, some groceries, and a bottle of yeast to start my bread-making with. When I saw the rough sod two rooms—or rather with a curtain across it made two rooms—well, I was only 20, and my heart went into my mouth. I felt like crying, but after a cup of tea and something to eat we set to and put things up. A very large box, in which a dinner set that was given me came, made a real good cupboard, another smaller one made a dressing table with shelves in, and was draped with pink lining with white spotted muslin over it. Then I had a nice lot of ornaments and two mats I had made. It now looked like home and I found the sods looked so rough because my father-in-law, who built it,

had not what was called cobbed it. I got my husband one wet day to do the high ends for me and show me how to mix the cob; and all the rest of the house inside as well as out I cobbed myself. It took some time to do, what with pulling out the bed and sofa and doing a bit one day, then white washing it over the next day with light coloured clay in water, then putting things back and doing another part; but when it was finished it did look nice and I was a very proud woman the next summer.

Sod houses with, thatched straw roofs were warm in winter and cool in summer, but mice and an odd rat or two liked to make their homes in the walls. The cob was tussock cut up fine by a hand chaff-cutter and mixed with clay into a stiff paste and then thrown on to the wall and smoothed all over. The men used a small piece of board with a handle on and did it that way like a plasterer, but I could not manage that, so I did it all with my hands. Then in those days I had to walk over four miles to get stores and our weekly mail, over tussocks and flax. No roads, but we battled on like others and in time we had a store cart come once a fortnight. There was a lot of hard rough work in those early days but we had our happy times too.

A Woman's Tongue

EARLY MEMORIES OF WOODEND [By REBECCA BRADLEY]

An odd character I remember ill the early days of Rangiora and Woodend was a Mrs Brewing, a brisk woman, wife of a very quiet inoffensive man, who had a small place in Woodend. But the woman was far from quiet; she claimed she belonged to one of the higher class, and was really "Lady somebody," and as far as looks went she might have been. She was a fine looking woman, good figure, a head of beautiful black wavy hair, and she knew how to dress. But, oh, her tongue! She used the most dirty language I have ever heard, and she was always quarrelling with some neighbour, so that at last the residents got up a petition to have her removed.

Her husband bought a small farm between two rivers—the Ashley and another I can't remember. That was in the seventies. The first I heard of her was one day in '62. My cousin John Ivory was working at Mr Leech's and one wet day had been sent to the blacksmith's in Woodend. When coming back he stopped to speak to Mrs Brewing at his gate. While they were talking, the door opened and Mrs Brewing called "Come to dinner." Brewing said "All right," but did not go at once. Five minutes later she called again, saying she had an apple pudding for dinner and that she wanted to go to Rangiora. The next thing John saw was Mrs Brewing coming out with the pudding on it dish which she just threw scalding hot on to Brewing's neck. Then she said "If you won't come in for it you can have it outside." One piece of the hot apple went on to John's face and it raised a blister, while poor Brewing had a bad neck for weeks. Another time I remember she came to Uncle Ivory's gardens about some fruit trees. I was helping my cousin Bessie to pick up some pears. Uncle was showing Mrs Brewing round and she seemed very interested. But there was one thing my uncle was very strict about; no man who worked for him was

allowed to use any dirty language. If any did they soon left. This day Mrs Brewing got worked up about some fruit trees she had got from Christchurch and of course there was soon some foul language. Uncle held up his hand and stopped her and then called Bessie to bring him a glass of cold water. When Bessie brought it Uncle handed it to Mrs Brewing. She said. "I don't want that. I did not ask for it." Uncle said, "No. but I thought you had better rinse your mouth out after that dirty talk that came from it." Needless to say that brought forth such a volley of swearing that Uncle ordered her off the place and she was never allowed on again to his knowledge. Brewing died some time in the eighties, but I do not know what became of Mrs Brewing.

ANIMALS FIRST

When the Baby Had to Wait

A FARMER'S WIFE IN THE SEVENTIES [By REBECCA BRADLEY]

My husband used to take a contract to harvest another 80 or 100 acres of grain for some small farmer besides his own. He was known as a really good stacker, would keep his own four men, and use his own horses and drays. That made a longer harvest time for me, and though the harvest time now is an extra busy time for the women, they can 'form no idea of the work we had to do—chop our own wood, milk one or two cows, feed pigs, bake our own bread—all with no conveniences as there are today. There were of course no taps to turn on for hot or cold water.

An Extra Heavy Day. Here is an extra heavy day I had once: The nor'-west winds had hindered the men for two days, but the Wednesday was calm. We were up soon after four o'clock. I packed two lunches and dinners for five men, got their breakfast ready, and the drays were out of the yard at six o'clock. No regular hours at harvest times those days. Then I mixed a batch of bread set to rise the night before, went out and milked two cows, chopped a large armful of wood and made up the fire, got my two little girls dressed, put the dough in a tin ready to bake, gave the children breakfast, and took my baby of six months to wash and dress after I had put bread in the oven to bake.

Gee-Gees! When I was doing baby the dogs started to bark. The elder girl looked out the back window and said, "Oh, mummy, gee gees." I knew what that meant. Three young horses had broken out of their paddock and come for water. Of course none was left in the trough. I hurried and put the fire safe, put my baby down without her morning breakfast—I was carrying that about with me, as unfortunately there were very few bottle-fed babies in those clays—shut the two little girls in the back kitchen, and event out to draw water. Oh, what a job it was to keep those young things from the open well with the dogs barking round.

Now the Pigs! I had just got up three buckets full when there was such a grunting and squealing, and a dozen pigs had broken out of the paddock

wanting a drink too. I got one more bucket up with the pigs jumping round the horses' legs, when all at once a horse kicked out and sent one into the well. I had just to go on drawing water to get rid of the horses. The third time I put the bucket down, if that pig did not go head first into the bucket and stick there! I had to draw it up before I could close the well. Oh, how I shook for fear the windlass would get out of my hand; but at last I got it up. Such a row! Talk about Bedlam; young horses kicking and prancing round, pigs squealing and grunting, dogs barking. The pig weighed about 60 lbs. and was jammed tight in the bucket. I had to tip the bucket over and pull the hind legs, and even then it was hard to get out.

Back to the House. The horses were satisfied at last, and I got them back in the paddock and carried some water for the pigs. I got them fastened up and event inside. Baby had cried herself to sleep, the bread was baked beautifully, just steamed a bit but half an hour in the sun remedied that, the children had been to the cupboard and found a saucer with black currant jam in and helped themselves. There were some very dirty faces and pinafores. It was a good thing the men were not coming home for dinner; it would have been a very ruffled woman to greet them and no dinner cooked for them.

Some Straight Talking. After getting a cup of tea and something to eat, I cooked a good hot tea for the men and afterwards did a bit of straight talking. The next morning the drays were delayed half an hour while two men fixed up the broken gap in the fence and put a tub of water for the horses. Two others fixed the pig paddock, and put a trough end ways through the fence so that I had not to put the bucket over the fence. I have often had a good laugh over that morning when telling it to my children.

"THE WOMAN'S FRIEND"

When the Water Race Came

DIGGING WELLS IN THE EARLY DAYS (Written for the Gazette) [By Rebecca Bradley]

I often think the farmers and their wives on the Canterbury Plains to-day cannot realise what a boon the water races are to them and how much hard work they save. In the early days, when settling on the farm, the first thing was to locate a spot for a well —generally two neighbours would help each other till they struck the first flow of water about sixteen to twenty feet below the surface, and this might last a week or so. Then it was a case of going another short distance of two or three feet, and mostly it was the wife who would have to lower the husband down by a rope and draw the shingle up in a large bucket. How I used to tremble, for fear the rope would give way and fall down on my husband's head! I was always glad when I had him safe out of the well again. This would go on every week or two till the main spring would be struck about thirty-four or five feet down. Well do I remember the day that happened with us. My husband had been down nearly two hours, with me drawing the shingle up slowly, it is true. When I looked down and

said "My word, that is a big stone jutting out on the south side," he said "Yes, like a lump of rock. I will pick round it while you draw this lot up." By the time I got the bucket emptied he had the stone loosened and a stream of water coming through. I sent the bucket down again and he pulled the stone out and placed it in the bucket as far as it would go, and the water just streamed out. I was scared about getting that stone up, and begged him to stand as far back as he could. At last I landed it safely, and by that time the water was half way up his legs. Then it was a, case of drawing him up. That was the main spring right enough, and it was not till five years after in a very hot dry summer that my husband had to go down again. Drawing the water up by windlass with a big four gallon iron oil-can made into a bucket was heavy work, and that generally fell to the lot of the farmers' wives to do. I have filled two 60-gallon water troughs full besides doing necessary house work and got two or three children ready before starting for a day in Rangiora by horse and dray. Then the pumps came into use. That was much easier, but when the water race came down it really was the woman's friend—as one of my neighbours called it—and our thanks were due to the late Mr Marmaduke Dixon, senr., who first took steps to get the races brought from the Waimakariri and never rested till he saw it started. I often thought it was a pity he did not live to see it running through West Eyreton so that he could be publicly thanked for his efforts.

Mrs Matilda Rebecca Bradley died in June 1937, aged 88 years. She was buried at the Cust Cemetery on the hill.

End.